



INVITATION TO LAUNCH

Entering New Frontiers and Keeping Connections

I write to you as the Chairperson of the Council of Irish Adoption Agencies (CIAA) to invite you to the launch of our new name of ICSWA, the Irish Council of Social Workers in Adoption. This will take place at **10 30 am on Wednesday 28th September 2022 in the Ashling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8**. Our change in name has been on our agenda for the last two years as it was felt that this no longer represented the majority of our membership which has been shifting over time with the closure of almost all of the voluntary adoption agencies. It was decided to put our launch on hold as we wanted this to be a formal interactive occasion. It was our hope that we could hold an event which would bring together our past and present with the intermingling of previous members with present day social workers who are dealing with the newer challenges of adoption, not least the influences of social media, DNA testing and GDPR legislation.

Our launch is very timely as it is taking place a few days before the watershed of the enactment of new adoption legislation for which we have been actively campaigning for several decades. As you will know this legislation gives adopted people a long awaited right to their original birth certificates and early birth information and has at last put this area of adoption service provision on a legal footing. It will involve new challenges to ensure best social work practice and make the role of our organization even more vital. It will also be an extremely important time for social workers to have a forum to reflect on the shift in their practice and the change in expectations and outcomes.

Our programme for the day will not just focus on our launch but will include relevant presentations on the impact of accessing adoption information on adopted adults and their decision to search and the impact of therapeutic services on birth mothers who have lost children through closed adoption. We are delighted that **Julia Feast** and **Deborah McNamara** have accepted our invitations to contribute to our day. We do hope that you will find this an interesting and valuable opportunity to reflect on practice issues at this crucial time.

Please note that you are required to [register your intention to attend](#) this event as our numbers are limited and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. We will also need to **be notified in advance of cancellations** and will be running a waiting list. A main course lunch will be provided so **please also let us know if you have any dietary requirements**. **RSVP's** should be emailed to laura.shine@tusla.ie before **Friday 9th September 2022**.

ICSWA Irish Council of Social Workers in Adoption

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Deborah McNamara is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist who specializes in the area of adult mental health. Deborah currently works in private practice in Galway City. Prior to her professional training in Clinical Psychology, Deborah worked as a Social Worker in the Adoption Service in Galway for over ten years. Deborah has a number of special interest areas including, psycho-oncology, infertility, bereavement and loss and adoption. Her doctoral research, published in 2021, examined the lived experiences of Irish mothers who have lost children through the closed adoption system.

Dr. Julia Feast OBE works as an independent Consultant, who specializes in the life-long issues of being adopted, Care and Donor Conception. She is an experienced social worker, trainer and researcher and has publications about the identity and information rights and needs of adopted people, adult care leavers and donor conceived people. In the past she worked as the Policy, Research and Development Consultant for CoramBAAF and BAAF.

Julia has undertaken 3 major research studies: **Adoption, Search and Reunions:** The long –term experience of adopted adults (1997-2000) **The Adoption Triangle Revisited:** A study of adoption research and reunion experiences (2002-2005) **Adversity, Adoption and Afterwards:** A mid life follow up study of women adopted from Hong Kong (2010-2013) and her PHD thesis **Curiosity and Opportunites:** The impact of accessing adoption Information on adopted adults and the decision to search for birth records.

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

10 :30 am -11am. Introduction. Hazel Douglas **Brief History of CIAA and launch of new name**

11 am- 11:30am. Open Forum

11: 30 am to 12:30pm. Deborah McNamara **Therapeutic outcomes of the Search and Reunion process for Birth Mothers.**

12 :30 pm to 1:15 pm. Main Course lunch in main hotel dining room

1:30pm – 3:30 pm. Julia Feast **Adoption, Search and Reunion: What Research and Reunion has told us.**

3 :30pm Wrap up and closure

We look forward to seeing you all to help us celebrate this very special occasion.

Hazel Douglas

Chairperson

ICSWA Irish Council of Social Workers in Adoption